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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PINR](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: COMMUNIST MP TURCAN READY TO VOTE FOR
LUPU, HOPES TO FORM A NEW PARTY

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In an October 20 meeting, Communist Party (PCRM) Member of Parliament Vladimir Turcan told the Ambassador that he hoped to avoid repeat elections by getting his fellow PCRM MPs to vote for Alliance for European Integration presidential candidate Marian Lupu. Turcan said he had recently sent a letter to ex-President Voronin urging the PCRM leader to back Lupu, who he said would need to make certain concessions to garner this support. Turcan, who is not a PCRM member, claimed that "about half" the PCRM faction already agreed with his position but were reluctant to go against party discipline and looked to him to convince Voronin. Even if the Voronin and the PCRM did not agree to back Lupu's candidacy, Turcan claimed that he and ten PCRM MPs were ready to openly cross the aisle to vote for Lupu, and then form a new political party, but acknowledged that the others feared Voronin. Turcan said that in 2007 he and Lupu had discussed forming a new left-oriented political party, but had abandoned this project at Voronin's request. End Summary.

Turcan: Early Elections Dangerous for Moldova

12. (C) In an October 20 meeting with the Ambassador, PCRM Member of Parliament Vladimir Turcan said the current situation was "very dangerous" for Moldova. If the country were forced to go to early elections, the social and economic situation would worsen. Turcan argued that if the current government appeared to be only temporary, then international donors such as the IMF would be hesitant to invest in Moldova. Continued uncertainties would also endanger Moldova's relations with its neighbors.

Supporting an Old Friend

13. (C) Turcan said that therefore he supported Lupu's Presidential candidacy. He also mentioned that in 2007 he and Lupu had discussed forming a new left-oriented, less ideological party. However, the-President Voronin had opposed the idea and asked them to stand down. Turcan believed that Voronin had feared that they would win too much support. Turcan charged that Voronin had long been jealous of him, and that Voronin had become jealous of Lupu as well when Lupu had expressed a desire to join Turcan.

Letter to Voronin

¶4. (C) Turcan said he had recently sent an analysis of the current situation in Moldova to Voronin, urging the PCRM leader to authorize the faction to give Lupu the eight votes needed for the Presidency. Turcan said he argued that in response to deteriorating economic conditions, "politically disappointed people" would be more likely to vote for "radical far-right" parties such as that belonging to Parliament Speaker and acting President Ghimpu. Turcan said he reminded Voronin that as legislation did not provide a specific deadline for early elections, they would be scheduled according to the political convenience of "those radicals."

¶5. (C) Turcan had explained to Voronin that early elections were also undesirable because the Alliance would amend electoral legislation. The Alliance would open polling stations abroad, wherever more than 300 Moldovan voters could be found, resulting in even more support for Alliance parties.

¶6. (C) Turcan said he also explained to Voronin that the Alliance would launch a campaign to delegitimize the PCRM, including by highlighting certain privatization cases. He cited as an example the Hotel Codru, which was privatized to a mysterious off-shore corporation for USD four million and then sold to another firm for USD 15

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million.

¶7. (C) Additionally, Turcan said he reminded Voronin that the EU would provide assistance to help stabilize the social-economic situation in country, with credit going to the Alliance. Thus, he argued, it was in PCRM interest to do everything possible to avoid early elections.

Convincing the Communists

¶8. (C) Turcan claimed that his position was supported by "about half" of the PCRM MPs. He said that 22 of the 23 PCRM faction members who had read his letter to Voronin told him they "totally agreed" with his reasoning; six more PCRM MPs had later approached him to say that they also agreed.

¶9. (C) However, Turcan conceded that some were members of the Central Committee and felt bound by party discipline. He said a number of PCRM MPs had begged him to convince Voronin to give Lupu the necessary votes. Turcan also said the PCRM was planning to hold a Party Plenum in the coming days to decide the Party's position on presidential elections. As Turcan was not a member of the Party, he was not sure yet if they would allow him the opportunity to take the floor and address the plenum, but hoped they would.

Negotiations with Lupu -- Agreement with
Conditions

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¶10. (C) Turcan also said he had suggested to Voronin that the PCRM should urgently start negotiations with Lupu and with the Alliance. He said he had recommended that the PCRM propose certain conditions -- one of which would be

dismissing Ghimpu and appointing a new Speaker proposed by the PCRM -- and added that he thought outside mediation might be helpful. Turcan also said that from his conversations with Filat, he believed the Prime Minister "would not mind" dismissing Ghimpu.

¶11. (C) Turcan said Lupu would need to make a public statement addressed to the PCRM faction which should include an explanation of the current situation, express the desire to work with the 48 PCRM deputies to resolve the problems, confirm that he favored remaining in the CIS and opposed joining Romania, and confirm that he had never been approached to negotiate. At the same time, Turcan wanted Lupu to state publicly that Ghimpu should be dismissed. Turcan said he hoped that AMN leader Urechean would make a similar statement, so that Lupu would not be isolated within the Alliance.

¶12. (C) The Ambassador responded that most of these conditions would be easy to fulfill, as the Alliance intended to keep Moldova in the CIS and had no plans to join Romania. However, he pointed out that dumping Ghimpu would likely mean the end of the Alliance, which is something that Lupu would surely realize. Turcan indicated that he agreed, and suggested that in order to not compromise the Alliance the PCRM might use more diplomatic language referring more broadly to restructuring parliamentary leadership.

Breaking Ranks?

¶13. (C) The Ambassador asked Turcan directly whether he would be ready to cross the aisle to vote for Lupu if Voronin did not agree. Turcan replied that he personally was ready. However, he understood that his single vote was not enough and consequently had asked Lupu to make a statement agreeing to concessions. Turcan said PCRM MP Calin had discussed such a statement with Lupu on October 16 and reported to Voronin that Lupu was ready to agree. Though Urechean had not yet signed on, Turcan said that he had discussed the statement with Lupu and that Lupu was already

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drafting it.

¶14. (C) Turcan said that he had ten PCRM MPs who were not only ready to join him in voting for Lupu, but were ready to go on afterwards to form a new political party. Some of these were PCRM members, but some, like him, were from outside the PCRM. He cited by name, Victor Stepaniuc, Iurie Stoicov, Dmitrii Todoroglu, Zinaida Greceanii, Ivan Calin, Petru Porcescu, Irina Vlah and Svetlana Popu. Turcan said his letter had proposed to Voronin that in order to avoid destroying the public image of the party through revealing an apparent disagreement within the Party, it would be better if Voronin delegated people to vote. (Comment: We note some contradictions in Turcan's assessment of the level of support other PCRM members are offering him. Though he was attempting to get Lupu to make a statement to earn PCRM support, he also said he was ready to walk even if Lupu does not make a statement. He said he believed half the PCRM faction supported him, but then cited only ten ready to follow him. End Comment)

¶15. (C) Though we had previously heard that former

Deputy Prime Minister Dodon was ready to vote for Lupu, Dodon was not on Turcan's list. Turcan explained that Dodon was in a "very delicate situation" because he had personally approved some "dubious" investment projects. Dodon was thus beholden to Voronin. Turcan also mentioned that Dodon had received 300,000 lei (about USD 30,000) for work teaching at the Economic Institute, but had never taught there.

Comment

¶16. (C) The Alliance purposely postponed the originally-scheduled October 23 parliamentary vote on Lupu in order to allow more time to secure the necessary votes beforehand. The re-scheduled presidential voting should take place within the next two weeks, before the November 11 deadline, so time for this scenario to ripen is very limited. Turcan therefore appears to be the key player in the PCRM faction who is pushing the party to vote for Lupu. Should Voronin continue to dig in his heels on the presidential vote, however, the big question is whether Turcan will desert the PCRM. Much will hinge on whether Turcan is able to convince others in the party whom he believes are sympathetic to his ideas to accompany him across the aisle.

CHAUDHRY